

STUDENT ALCOHOL AND DRUG

MISUSE POLICY

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1. **Purpose and Scope**

1.1 Leeds Arts University is committed to providing a safe working and learning environment and to protecting the welfare of its community. In the context of this policy the phrase ‘University premises’ refers to all those places in which the University carries out its activities and extends to those sites that are occupied temporarily by the University for events, as well as those occupied by students as part of work placements and during educational visits.

1.2 This policy relates to the use of alcohol and other drugs that are controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 and the unauthorised use and possession of prescription medicines regulated by the Medicines Act 1968.

1.3 The University recognises the risks that the misuse of alcohol or drugs can have on a student’s health, safety and academic performance. Such misuse can also have a significant impact on the student’s wider University experience and relationships with others.

1.4 Leeds Arts University does not endorse the use of drugs or misuse of alcohol but we aim to provide support by facilitating the early identification of such problems, encouraging students to seek advice, help and assistance before their studies, health or their relationships with others become adversely affected.

1.5 It is also recognised that on occasions it may be necessary for the University to take disciplinary action for acts of misconduct or where illegal activities are taking place, particularly if they endanger the student, other students or other members of the University.

1. **Harm Reduction Method**

2.1 Our policy of support and harm reduction processes prioritises the welfare, wellbeing and safety of our community using compassionate proactive means. We understand that some students may use alcohol and drugs, we also believe that a zero-tolerance stance to drug and alcohol misuse can be harmful and damaging as it can deter students from reaching out for support and help as they may fear being punished. We believe that a harm reduction stance is in the best interests of our student body and reduces barriers to accessing support. Having access to accurate and useful advice is essential to reducing harm as well as providing support.

2.2 The harm reduction stance shows a commitment to reducing harm by offering the support, resources and education students need to feel safe, make informed choices, to be able to succeed at University and in the future. Harm reduction method works on the principles of Responsibility and Respect, Information and Support.

2.2.1 Responsibility and Respect

The University provides a safe and inclusive environment that fosters respect for difference and consideration of others with differing backgrounds and experiences. As a place of education, antisocial behaviour that negatively impacts on others’ wellbeing and ability to learn is not acceptable, students, are expected to act responsibly and treat each other with respect as set out in the Student Charter.

* + 1. Information

The University Student Advice and Wellbeing Team will take steps to empower students to use evidence-based information in order to promote informed, responsible decision making, supporting the development of self-confidence and assertiveness skills so that individuals are resilient to peer and other pressures. The University is committed to providing education and advice around the use of drugs and alcohol. Students can confidentially report risks if they are concerned about someone’s health, wellbeing or behaviour on eStudio.

* + 1. Support

If any student wants or needs support to address use of drugs or alcohol, the University commits to providing this support through Student Advice and Wellbeing and to signpost to professional support services where appropriate. Support will be person centred, compassionate and kept confidential unless there are serious concerns about the risk of significant harm to any person. Where a student has caring responsibilities for children under 18 or vulnerable adults and the nature of their use of drugs including alcohol presents a risk to those they care for, information may need to be shared externally following Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance.

* 1. Alcohol, spiking - other drug use and consent

S74 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 states that a person consents to a sexual act only if they agree by choice, and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. If a person’s capacity to consent to sex is limited by drugs including alcohol, then they can’t give consent. Impaired judgement because of consumption of drugs including alcohol is not a valid defence against sexual offences. ‘Spiking’ (surreptitiously contaminating food or drink with any psychoactive substance, including alcohol and/or administering increased amounts of known substances) is illegal and very dangerous regardless of the intention and whether or not an attack or assault is carried out. Students can report incidents of suspected spiking using the eStudio but are also strongly advised to contact the police as soon as they suspect an incident of spiking has taken place, so that the police can take forensic evidence.

2.5 Our harm reduction stance does not mean anti-social, disruptive or criminal behaviour is acceptable, any such misconduct will continue to be addressed through the Student Disciplinary Policy as set out below.

1. **The Legal Position**

3.1 Classification of Illegal Substances

Most drugs come under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, which makes it illegal to possess certain drugs and to supply them to others. They are classified as class A, B or C, depending on the presumed risk of harm they may cause:

* + - Class A Drugs (this category includes LSD, ecstasy, heroin and cocaine);
    - Class B Drugs (this category includes amphetamines, barbiturates and other weaker opiates, ketamine and cannabis);
    - Class C Drugs (this category includes a number of other weaker sedatives and stimulants).
  1. The introduction of the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 means that it is also illegal to produce or supply psycho-active substances (previously referred to as 'legal highs') to anyone, or to possess them with the intention of supplying them.

3.3 Whilst the University has a commitment to reducing harm, providing support and education to students regarding alcohol and drug misuse, the University must operate in the context of national legislation and would be committing a criminal offence were it to knowingly permit the use, production or supply of any controlled drugs on its premises. Therefore, the University cannot allow the possession, use or supply of controlled drugs or psychoactive substances on its premises and the following must be taken into consideration:

1. Under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, it is a criminal offence for Leeds Arts University to knowingly permit the use, production or supply of any controlled drugs on its premises.
2. Under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 it is an offence for Leeds Arts University to knowingly permit the production, supply, import or export of any substance if it is likely to be used for its psychoactive effects and regardless of its potential for harm. The only exemptions from the Act are nicotine, alcohol, caffeine, medicinal products and those already controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act.
3. The University forbids students from bringing drugs onto its premises and students must not sell, attempt to sell or give drugs to any other students, staff members or visitors on University premises. If any such incidents take place on University premises or other premises being used by the University, these incidents will be taken seriously and may be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Procedure and could also be reported to the police.
4. Leeds Arts University is required by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, as far as is reasonable, the health and safety of its employees, students and others at work. Drug and alcohol misuse can have an impact on the health and safety of an individual and also on others. Students should not attend University under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If a student is found to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs potentially rendering them unfit to work in the studios, classrooms or workshops, or if they ignore the guidance on University events, then this will be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

**4. Other information**

4.1 The University will provide support and guidance for any student who is experiencing difficulties with alcohol or drug misuse. In some cases, students may be struggling with an addiction to either alcohol or drugs. Indicators of a potential alcohol or drug misuse problem may include:

* + - periods of unexplained or frequently taken absence;
    - poor time keeping;
    - behavioural, or sudden mood changes;
    - deterioration in relationships;
    - reduction in performance or productivity;
    - dishonesty and theft;
    - accidents and near misses;
    - smelling of alcohol;
    - confusion.

4.2 The University regards an individual’s dependence on either drugs or alcohol as a serious health problem with consequences for fitness to study. If a student engages with the Student Advice and Wellbeing Team and agrees a programme of support with a view to rehabilitation, then the University will allow reasonable agreed absences for advice, support and treatment. Appropriate policies and procedures that may be apply in these circumstances are:

* + - Academic Engagement Policy and Procedure;
    - Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure;
    - Extenuating Circumstances Procedure.

4.3 In order for these policies to apply the student will be required to maintain contact with the Student Advice and Wellbeing Team, inform them of their progress and provide confirmation from their GP or external agency where appropriate of their attendance and progress through treatment.

**Appendix 1: Where to Find Support and Advice**

* Student Advice and Wellbeing Team
* Chaplaincy
* Your GP

External Agencies:

**Forward Leeds**

Forward Leeds provides support for adults, young people and families needing help with alcohol and drug use in Leeds <https://www.forwardleeds.co.uk/>

**Drinkline**

Drinkline is the national alcohol helpline. If you're worried about your own or someone else's drinking, you can call this free helpline, in complete confidence. Call 0300 123 1110 (weekdays 9am – 8pm, weekends 11am – 4pm).

**Addiction**

A UK wide treatment agency, helping individuals, families and communities to manage the effects of drug and alcohol misuse [www.addaction.org.uk](http://www.addaction.org.uk)

**Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain**

The British branch of this worldwide network, AA is an organisation of people who share their experience with each other hoping to solve their problems and help others to recover from alcoholism [**www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk**](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

0800 9177 650 [help@aamail.org](mailto:help@aamail.org)

**Al-Anon**

Al-Anon is worldwide and offers support and understanding to the families and friends of problem drinkers.

Confidential Helpline 0207 40 30 888 open 10 am - 10pm or visit [**www.al-anonuk.org.uk**](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/)

**Alcohol Concern**

The national agency on alcohol misuse for England and Wales. Provides general information about alcohol, and can help put you in touch with your nearest alcohol advice centre.

Call 0300 123 1110or visit [**www.alcoholconcern.org.uk**](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/)

**Drinkaware**

Drinkaware is an independent charity working to reduce alcohol misuse and harm in the UK. They aim to help people make better choices about drinking. https:/[/www.drinkaware.co.uk/](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/)

**NHS Choices**

This site provides advice and information on alcohol and offers a database of support and treatment services

[**Alcohol support services page**](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/alcohol/Pages/Alcoholsupport.aspx)

**ADFAM**

Information and advice for families of alcohol and drug users. The website has a list of local family support services.

[**www.adfam.org.uk**](http://www.adfam.org.uk)

**Talk to Frank**

National drugs awareness site for young people and parents/carers

[**www.talktofrank.com**](http://www.talktofrank.com)

**Samaritans**

Provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicide.

You can ring the phone line on 116 123 or email [**jo@samaritans.org**](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)(they try to get back to you within 24 hours) or visit [**www.samaritans.org**](http://www.samaritans.org)